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We claim:--ART 34 AMDT

1. A process for the preparation of polyurethane foams having improved long-term stability by reacting
  - a) polyisocyanates with
  - b) compounds having at least two hydrogen atoms reactive with isocyanate groups, in the presence of inhibitors, wherein the inhibitors are embedded in a substance which is inert under the conditions of the polyurethane preparation.
2. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitors are embedded in a wax.
3. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inert substances have a melting point such that they melt during the reaction which results in the polyurethane.
4. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inert substances have a heat of fusion of from 50 to 250 joules/gram.
5. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the melting point of the inert substances is from 20 to 150°C.
6. A process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the wax contains one or more polar groups.
7. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitors are selected from the group consisting of  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated compounds, carboxylic acids, carboxylic acid derivatives, ketones or aldehydes, lactones, lactams and/or cyclic ethers, esters, sulfonic acids, cyclic sulfonic esters and/or sulfones, salts of metals of subgroups I, II and/or VIII and organic cyclic compounds, inorganic or organic acids and acid derivatives which can liberate acids in a hydrolysis process.
8. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the encapsulated inhibitors are present in particulate form.

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9. A process as claimed in claim 8, wherein the particles have a median particle diameter of from 20 to 800  $\mu\text{m}$ .
- 5 10. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitors are used in an amount of from 0.1 to 20% by weight, based on the weight of the polyurethane.
- 10 11. A process for the preparation of inhibitor systems, wherein the inhibitors are taken up in molten wax and then converted into particulate form by atomizing in an air stream or by freeze-drying.
- 15 12. A process for the preparation of an inhibitor system as claimed in claim 11, wherein the inhibitors are taken up in molten wax and then dispersed in a polar liquid.
- 20 13. An inhibitor for polyurethanes, which is encapsulated in a substance which is inert under the conditions of the polyurethane preparation.
- 25 14. The use of an inhibitor as claimed in claim 13 for the preparation of polyurethanes.
15. A polyurethane which can be prepared by a process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 10.

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